

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-13, 15-17 and 19 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 6, 8-11, 16, 17 and 19 have been amended for purposes of further clarity.

Entry of the above amendments is respectfully requested.

Initially, Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 1-3 and 5 are allowed, and that claims 6-13, 15-17 and 19 are allowable.

I. Response to Rejection of Claims 6-9, 12, 13, and 15 Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 6-9, 12, 13 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Regarding the rejection of claims 6-9, 12, 13 and 15, it is respectfully submitted that the recitation "at the core of the component, the rate of cooling between 800°C and 500°C is greater than or equal to the critical bainitic velocity" in claims 6-9, 12, 13 and 15 is definite. That is, the claim limitation promotes a phenomenon of auto-tempering and retention of from 3-20% residual austenite. *See* page 3, line 19 to page 4, line 2.

Nonetheless, to advance prosecution, claim 6 has been amended to delete the phrase "equal to", as suggested by the Examiner.

Regarding the rejection of claims 8 and 9, the Examiner asserts that the step "at the end of the cooling operation to a temperature of less than or equal to 200°C" is not actively recited prior to tempering or no tempering. However, claims 8 and 9 depend from claim 6, which recites that the component is "cooled to a temperature of less than or equal to 200°C". Additionally, claims 8 and 9 further limit the limitation "optionally, tempering is effected at a

temperature of less than or equal to Ac_1 " recited in claim 6. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the claims appear definite.

Nonetheless, to advance prosecution, claims 8 and 9 have been amended to delete the phrase "at the end of the cooling operation to a temperature of less than or equal to 200°C".

Further, the Examiner rejects claims 10, 11, 16, 17 and 19 as being indefinite for having no antecedent basis for "steel plate". Claims 10 and 11 have been amended to provide antecedent basis.

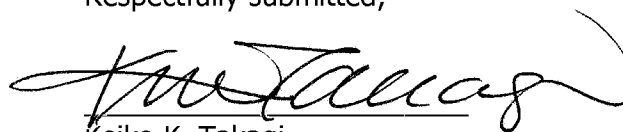
Finally, the Examiner asserts that the method claims should positively recite active steps. Method claim 10 has been amended accordingly.

In view of the above, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-3, 5-13, 15-17 and 19 is respectfully requested. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below. The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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